REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 and 10-12 are pending in the present application and Claims 1, 4, 10 and 12 are amended by the present response. Support for amendments to the claims can be found in the specification and claims as originally filed. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable by Loose et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,517,433) in view of Takemoto et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,472,195, herein "Takemoto"); and Claims 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Loose and Takemoto in view of Tsuji et al. (Japanese Publication No. 2000-011725, herein "Tsuji").

Before turning to the outstanding art rejections, it is believed that a brief review of the claimed invention would be helpful.

In this regard, the claimed invention describes a gaming apparatus that includes a variable display unit configured to variable display a plurality of symbols and a front side display unit having a first area for enabling viewing of the symbols displayed by the variable display unit and a second area, which surrounds the first area, for enabling the display of images thereon. In addition, the gaming apparatus includes a backlight set in an end portion of the front side display unit to light up the symbols displayed by the variable display unit and to light up the front side display unit and a reflecting cover set in the end portion of the front side display unit and configured to allow light emitted from the backlight to directly illuminate the symbols displayed by the variable display unit, the reflecting cover including one end connected to the end portion of the front side display unit and an unconnected free end.

Addressing now the §103(a) rejection in the outstanding Office Action, Applicants respectfully traverse the §103(a) rejection based on Loose and Takemoto for the following reasons.

Specifically, regarding the rejection of independent Claim 1 and 4, the combination of Loose and Takemoto fails to describe or suggest a ***reflecting cover including one end connected to the end portion of the front side display unit and an unconnected free end.***

Loose describes a video display that displays images on a first area for enabling viewing of symbols displayed by the reels 12a-12c. More specifically, when a player using the system of Loose presses the "Pay Table" key on the button panel 23, the video image 18 depicts "Pay Table" in response to the command by the player. At this time, as shown in Figure 5, a part of the "Pay Table" is displayed on the first area.[1]

Takemoto describes a system for displaying an appeal with respect to a game machine in the event of a winning spin. In addition, Takemoto describes a game machine having a display 2.

However, neither Loose nor Takemoto describes or suggests a ***reflecting cover including one end connected to the end portion of the front side display unit and an unconnected free end.***

In a non-limiting example, illustrated in Figures 36-38 of the present application, there is shown a reflective cover 2f which has one end connected to the display unit 5 and an unconnected free end. This feature is not described or suggested in Loose and Takemoto.

Nevertheless the outstanding Action relies on Tsuji as curing the above noted deficiencies of Loose and Takemoto with regard to the claimed invention.

Tsuji describes a sheet-like light emitting device and a corresponding play machine. As shown in Figure 7, Tsuji describes a sheet-like light emitting device 40 comprising a pair

[1] Loose, col. 3, lines 56-61 and Fig. 5.

of light guiding panels 41, 42, a reflecting sheet 43, a pair of lamps 44, 45 and a pair of lamp reflectors 46, 47. The sheet-like light emitting device 40 is mounted on a back surface of a central panel 31. The light guiding panels 41, 42 are connected to each other via the reflecting sheet 43 and the lamp 44 is positioned at the top of the light guiding panels 41, 42. The lamp reflector 46 has a U-Shaped cross-section, one end connected to the top of the light guiding panel 41 and the other end connected to the top of the light guiding panel 42 so as to completely surround the lamp 44. Similarly, the lamp reflector 47 has a U-shaped cross-section, with one end connected to the bottom of the light guiding panel 41 and the other end connected to the bottom of the light guiding panel 42 so as to completely surround the lamp 45.

In this structure, when light is emitted from the lamps 44, 45 it enters the light guiding panel 41 where the light is guided by the light guiding panel 41 and is diffusely reflected by the reflecting sheet 43 in order to illuminate the central panel 31. Further, when light emitted from the lamps 44, 45 enters the light guiding panel 42, the light is guided by the light guiding panel 42 and is diffusely reflected by the reflecting sheet 43 to illuminate symbols displayed on the reel 34.

In contrast, Claims 1 and 4 recite ***reflecting cover including one end connected to the end portion of the front side display unit and an unconnected free end.***

In other words, in a non-limiting example of the above noted feature illustrated in Figure 37, there is shown a panel display unit 5 comprising a protection glass 500, an LCD panel 501, a light guiding panel 503, a scattering panel 504 and a frame 505. The panel display unit 5 is mounted on a back surface of a cabinet 2. The protection glass 500, the LCD panel 501, the light guiding panel 503 and the scattering panel 504 are stacked in respective order and constitute a multiple layer panel 5'. In addition, the multiple layer panel 5' is clamped by the frame 505.

Further, as shown in Figure 36, the cold cathode fluorescent lamp (CCFL) 2e is positioned at a bottom of the scattering panel 504. In addition, a reflecting cover 2f, which partially surrounds the CCFL 2e, has U-shaped cross-section with a first end connected to a bottom of the panel display unit 5 by means of a lower boss 2c' and a free end without connection.

In this structure, when light at the first end side, emitted from the CCFL 2e, enters the light guiding panel 503, the light is guided by the light guising panel 503 and is diffusely reflected by the scatter panel 504 to illuminate the LCD panel 501. In contrast, when the light at the free end side, emitted from the CCFL 2e, enters the space between the panel display unit 5 and the reflecting cover 2f, the light directly illuminates symbols displayed on reels 3R, 3C and 3L. This feature is not described or suggested in Tsuji.

In other words, Tsuji provides a play machine that enable viewing of both the central panel and the symbols displayed on the reel by respectively connecting both ends of the lamp reflector to one end of the pair of the light guiding panels in order to completely surround the lamp with the lamp reflector and the pair of light guiding panels.

In contrast, the invention recited in Claims 1 and 4 includes a gaming apparatus that enables clear viewing of both the LCD panel and the symbols displayed on the reels by only connecting a single end of the reflecting cover to the panel display unit in order to partially surround the CCFL with the reflecting cover and the panel display unit.

Thus, in contrast to the device of Tsuji, the claimed invention is able to decrease the number of parts of the gaming apparatus as the light emitted from the backlight can be used to directly illuminate the symbols on the reels, resulting in a reduction in the manufacturing cost of the gaming apparatus.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that invention recited in Claims 1 and 4 patentably distinguishes over the Loose, Takemoto and Tsuji references considered individually or in combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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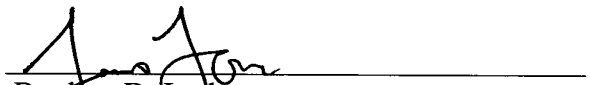

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